exception of the doctor or visitors. There was a letter from my office awaiting me when I reached the Mir's palace. The Mir told me about it right after our first greeting. He was understanding enough to realize I would be happy to hear from home. 205

I guess many of the things about Hunza wouldn't allow the country to come under the heading of a democracy, but from what I saw of life and living in Hunza, I assure you it is more of a democracy than any other democracy in existence today. 642

Hunza has no policemen, no soldiers, no bureaucracy, no customs officers or immigration officers. They do have the Mir who is the ruler and true head of the state and the Mir appoints the Wazir who is his right hand man and acts as judge. 692 643 [647] [693]

All major squabbles and disputes are handled by the Mir. He holds court regularly and makes the decisions and his word is law and cannot be challenged or contested by anyone. Minor cases are looked after and into and tried by the Wazir.

Hunza does not have a jail. There is no lockup whatsoever. If and when a crime is committed, the criminal or culprit is banished to a place called Shimshal. At Shimshal the criminal or guilty person is not confined or jailed. He just has to live in that rugged place, where living is grim. The altitude is somewhere around 12,000 or 13,000 feet, and eking an existence out of the land there is most difficult and precarious. Actually the form of punishment is a sort of ostracism. 697 681 [133]

Evidently the threat of being sentenced to live in Shimshal is a great deterrent, because few crimes are committed. There have only been two instances in the last ten years where serious crimes have occurred. In one instance it was a youth who had posted indecent signs on trees and other places. He was hailed before 674 [689]

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689 the Wazir and given a stern warning and that ended that!

682 Another case occurred about 10 years ago when the Wazir's son became involved with a young man and girl. In this case the boy and girl (for that is what they were, rather than young man and woman) were misbehaving in the area adjacent to the Wazir's home. An argument was started when they were asked to leave the premises. The young man became unruly, then offensive and he said many unkind and indecent things. The Wazir's son warned him to move on and behave himself, but the young man refused to listen and persisted in his actions. The Wazir's son went into his home, got a gun, and said to him, "Now move away from here or I'll shoot you!"

But still the young hoodlum refused to listen or be warned. So the Wazir's son shot him. At the trial he claimed that he did not know the gun was loaded and he just made the threat in an effort to frighten the lad and make him go about his business. The boy died and the Wazir's son was charged with murder, and for this he was banished to Shimshal for 10 years.

A short time later the dead boy's parents appeared before the Mir and begged him to remit the sentence to the Wazir's son, as they claimed they believed him and that he did not intend to shoot their son. Besides, their son had provoked the attack. After he had been in Shimshal for two years, the Mir had him brought back and as the matter stands at the present moment in Hunza, this lad is now the Wazir.

681 In the olden days, a form of punishment in Hunza that was administered on instructions from the Mir was to immerse the culprit in the cold waters of the Hunza River. A 15-minute immersion in these icy waters was tantamount to a death sentence.